

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 20, 2020

The Honorable Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Verma:

We are writing out of concern about a Request for Information that the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued in November 2019 that could have negative implications for American workers and health care consumers.

Specifically, under Notice ID A200556, CMS issued a request for information for operators of contact center operations for CMS, including 1-800-MEDICARE and support operations for the federally-facilitated marketplace.¹ These operations are obviously crucial to the well-being of tens of millions of Americans.

In that RFI, CMS asked providers to “Provide industry best practice on if and how facilitating contact centers located in emerging markets can reduce labor costs; provide any lessons learned or cost savings. Responses can include remote work; but shall provide security measures required to implement compliance with handling Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and HIPAA regulations.”

We were disturbed by the apparent implication that CMS is considering offshoring these jobs to low-income countries where contractors can more easily exploit and underpay workers. Currently, this contract employs about 10,000 workers who help millions of Americans access health care services. Many of these workers are located in small communities such as London, Kentucky and Chester, Virginia, which would be harmed greatly by the loss of significant numbers of jobs—especially if resolution of the outstanding misclassification complaints result in workers being moved into more appropriate, higher-paying classifications.

Given the lax enforcement of privacy laws in call centers in many countries, we are also concerned by the possible jeopardizing of the security of Americans’ protected health information.

¹ See

https://beta.sam.gov/opp/8c1395bbd4564950a0affe520234861f/view?index=opp&page=1&is_active=false&organization_id=100075508.

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To that end, we ask for your prompt reply to the following:

1. Is CMS considering locating any of its call center services outside the United States? If not, please clarify why CMS included question 1.f. in the RFI.
2. Has CMS done or is planning to do an analysis of the economic cost to the 11 communities where the call centers are currently located if the next CCO contractor relocates operations?
3. Has CMS done an analysis of the costs of retraining its CCO workforce if the next CCO contractor relocates operations?

Thank you in advance for your quick attention to this issue.

Sincerely,



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



Patty Murray
United States Senator